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The Role of Multilingualism and Environmental Influences on Identity Perceptions Among University Students of Part-Arab and Part Non-Arab Ethnicities

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Dedication

I dedicate this Master or Arts thesis to those students who participated in this study as well as individuals who identify as part-Arab; past, present and future.

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Abstract

The Role of Multilingualism and Environmental Influences on Identity Perception Among University Students of Part-Arab and Part Non-Arab Ethnicities

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How is identity shaped in "part-Arab" young adults who grew up in a post 9/11 society which tends to find conflict with “the other?” Immigrants and refugees from the Middle East living in the United States may experience an internal conflict on how to raise their next generation. The occurrences of assimilation and appropriation in addition to the feeling of the Arabic word, *Al-ghorba*, or longing for the homeland, greatly influence parents’ choice of language in communicating to his or her child. The use of Arabic language in the household has been shown to deepen ones connection to his or her Arab heritage, yet does a lack of Arabic create a distance in this connection? When immigrants select life partners of differing ethnicities, children from multiethnic marriages may find themselves challenged by their own discovery of self-identification, thus reaching *identity affirmation* later than mono-ethnic children.

Rhetoric involving migration of ethnic Arabs in the U.S. has increased exponentially over the past decade, thus marking an increased importance to focus on shaping identity in ethnically part-Arab young adults and because language so closely links us to identity, the aim of this paper seeks to explore how languages and environmental influences affect ethnic identity formation among part-Arab university students. A total of ten students who identified as part-Arab participated in focus groups and follow-up interviews, answering questions related to ethnic identity, environmental influences on identity, and languages spoken. Students were recruited through Arabic language classes at the University of Texas at Austin as well through the snowball effect through word of mouth. Languages spoken inside and outside of the home, travel to the Middle East/North Africa region, food and traditions shared within the family, religious practices and color of skin arose as factors influencing identity affirmation in university students who identified part-Arab. Findings primarily supported, yet somewhat challenged existing literature which reviewed language acquisition and identity among students who identified as multiethnic. In addition, Arab American immigration patterns resulting in mixed marriages, post-9/11 literature, and heritage language learning literature also support the current research findings.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The phrase "actions speak louder than words" is one of those English idioms that conveys a method of communication through actions rather than words. Ironically though, the phrase is expressed through the English language itself; spoken or written. Language as a form of communication gives the speaker the ability to share his or her thoughts and emotions clearly to the listener, but what happens when he or she attempts to speak English to someone who only knows Arabic or vice versa? This question raises the concept that language links the communicator to something on a larger scale. Language connects people to their identities: who they are and where they came from. Perhaps what we think of as simple and straight-forward about getting a point across actually turns into something quite complex when linked with this idea of identity.

A myriad of variables influences an individual's ability to develop and shape his or her own personal identity, including family environment, peer relationships, and the languages used to communicate within these two frameworks. Another important variable includes the location where these relationships take place. As families continue to migrate and settle around the world, exposure to varying cultures, ethnicities, and languages influence the families' lifestyles and the upbringing of their children. Young immigrants who select life partners of differing ethnicities and nationalities face challenges of raising multiethnic children, and as these children mature, they may find themselves conflicted with their own discovery of self-identification within the greater society. Although multiethnic marriages and births of children in these marriages are rising dramatically in the United States, marriages between members of racial and

ethnic minorities and majorities were not legally recognized until 1967.[1] Yet today, the growth rate of multiethnic families in the United States has increased 3x faster compared to mono-ethnic families with a 10 percent rise in the past 40 years of babies born to parents of differing ethnicities[2]

More specifically, marriages between Arabs and non-Arabs have proliferated, and these partnerships have increasing salience as discussions surrounding opening and closing borders to "threatening" ethnicities has erupted into the current political scene. With over 1.02 million Middle Eastern and North African immigrants residing in the United States, this population makes up about 2.5 percent of the 41.3 million immigrants according to a 2013 statistic.[3] Because migration issues surrounding those of Arab ethnicity have become important to popular rhetoric in the United States and because languages spoken in the home so closely link individuals to identity, this paper aims to examine how environmental influences and language spoken affect ethnic identity formation among university students who identify as ethnically part-Arab.

Identifying ethnicities and constructing categories is a fluid notion, as society evolves and terms are challenged academically. As an ethnographer for this study, I chose to use the term part-Arab to convey the offspring of one parent whose ethnicity is full Arab and the other parent who is ethnically non-Arab. I was challenged by the idea of someone being half-something because it denoted the lack of wholeness. I understood the idea of fully mixed to represent wholeness, yet could not easily describe this concept through succinct words because describing someone as fully mixed by way of Arab and non-Arab ethnicity is complex. Ultimately I chose

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[1] Brittian, Aerika S., Adriana J. Umana-Taylor and Chelsea L. Derlan. 2013. "An Examination of Biracial College Youth's Family Ethnic Socialization, Ethnic Identity and Adjustment: Do Self-Identification Labels and University Context Matter?" *Cultural Diversity And Ethnic Minority Psychology* 19, no. 2: 177-189.

[2] http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/6/11/report-us-population-is-increasingly-multiracial.html

[3] http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/middle-eastern-and-north-african-immigrants-united-states/

to use the term "part-Arab" to use throughout the paper, although for recruitment purposes, I used the term "half-Arab" with a descriptive explanation proceeding the term.

This examination includes analyzing the students' use of language within family and peer settings and contextualizing this language use within the location(s) where the students spent their childhood and adolescence. I argue that, contrary to what scholarship about language and identity suggests, strong familial relations, but not necessarily Arabic bilingualism within this dynamic, correlate to connectedness to a student's part-Arab identity. Additionally, I argue that location(s) of upbringing highly influences the student's ability to learn languages which correspond to his or her multiethnic identity. Finally, I demonstrate that as a student's proficiency in the Arabic language increases, his or her own understanding of what it means to be Arab strengthens.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews existing literature about Arab immigration patterns and occurrences of mixed marriages in the United States. Further explored are the constructs *identity affirmation* and *identity achievement*, both of which are described as essential for individuals to reach in order to feel comfortable with their own selves, thus leading to productiveness within the greater society. This review looks at literature expressing Arab-American relations in a pre and post-9/11 United States. It also encompasses social constructs including *white passing*, and the relationship between multiethnic identity and bilingualism, and *code-switching* between languages. Finally, heritage language learning literature is reviewed, which provides insight into pedagogy for Arabic language education.

Mixed Marriages

Arab immigration to the United States is characterized by multiple waves. The first wave of Arab immigration occurred over a century ago (1880s) when Arabs, the majority of them Christians and from the Mount Lebanon region of Greater Syria (still under Ottoman rule), immigrated to New England America. Many immigrants from this wave wanted to assimilate into the U.S. mainstream culture as quickly as possible, and so they changed their names, extinguished themselves from traditions and voluntarily or involuntarily became an "invisible minority."[4] Immigrants orienting themselves towards mainstream culture and away from their heritage culture was popular during this time period when the idea of the United States as "melting pot" stressed anglo-conformity.[5] A second wave of Middle East and North Africa immigrants came to the United States after World War II and the 1948 war between residents of Palestine and the newly founded State of Israel. In 1965, the Immigration and Nationality Act ceased preference for European immigrants, emphasized family reunification, and cut out

[4] Kukczycki, Andrzej, and Arun Peter Lobo. 2001. "Deepening the Melting Pot: Arab-Americans at the Turn of the Century." *Middle East Journal*, 55, no. 3: p 461.
[5] Kukczycki, Andrzej, and Arun Peter Lobo. 2001, 461.

national quotas, resulting in an even larger third wave of Arab immigration in the 1970s. This wave saw an increase of Egyptians, Moroccans, Iraqis, and Palestinians which added to the numbers of Syrian and Lebanese Arab Americans.[6] In the 1980s the Arab American population grew rapidly from approximately 700,000 to over one million in 1990; a 42% increase in just under a decade. The fourth wave is the wave of Arab immigrants (and refugees) who arrived after the turn of the 21st century, mostly displaced due to war or political and civil unrest. The United States saw an increase of Iraqi and Syrian citizens during this wave. The most recent two waves of Arab immigrants did not feel as much pressure to assimilate and acculturate into the mainstream culture as much as the first two waves had, but some likely chose to do so out of a desire for an easier life for their next generation. Arab Americans of Lebanese and Syrian descent account for 60% of the Arab population in the United States.[7] Today, the majority of 3.5 million foreign and native born Arab Americans practice Christianity as their religion and reside in larger cities such as Detroit (and Dearborn), Michigan; New York, New York; Chicago, Illinois; and Houston, Texas.[8] In this literature, "foreign born" means born in the Middle East/North Africa regions; i.e. first generation immigrants, and "native born" means born in the United States; i.e. second generation and beyond.

For the purposes of reviewing mixed marriages for this study, I will focus on the third wave who arrived in the 1970s because this wave primarily makes up the population of parents and grandparents of current participants. Interethnic marriage in the United States became officially legal in the year 1967 when the U.S. Supreme Court overruled miscegenation laws under Loving vs. Virginia. After the abolition of endogamy laws in the United States, interethnic marriages saw a steady increase during the time period that coincides with the 3rd wave of Arab immigration. Mixed marriages increased from .07% in 1970, to 1.3% in 1980, and to 2.2% in

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[6] Kukczycki, Andrzej, and Arun Peter Lobo. 2002. "Patterns, Determinants, and Implications of Intermarriage Among Arab Americans," *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 64, no. 1: 204.

[7] Kukczycki, Andrzej, and Arun Peter Lobo. 2001, 463.

[8] Kukczycki, Andrzej, and Arun Peter Lobo. 2001, 465.

1992.[9] A study reported in 1990 looked at intermarriage between Arab Americans (foreign and native born) and non-Arab Americans and found that 79% of Arab men and 73% of Arab women married non-Arab spouses.[10] One possibility for the higher percentage of men marrying outside their ethnicity at the time was the disproportionate ratio of Arab men to women as immigrants to the United States (149 to 100). Alternatively, 19% of men and 24% of women married within their same Arab group in this same 1990 study.[11] The largest group of Arabs who married outside their ethnicity were Lebanese and Syrian Americans, which makes sense given that these two groups made up the largest percentage of Arab Americans living in the United States overall. The following table is an abridged version of the findings from the 1990 study results.

[9] Qian, Zenchao. 1997. "Breaking the Racial Barriers: Variations in Interracial Marriage between 1980 and 1990." *Demography*, 34, no. 2: 263.

[10] Kukczycki, Andrzej, and Arun Peter Lobo. 2002, 205.

[11] Kukczycki, Andrzej, and Arun Peter Lobo. 2002, 205.

Table 1: Arab American Marriages, 1990

	ARAB MEN	SAME GROUP	DIFF ARAB GROUP	NON-ARAB	ARAB WOMEN	SAME GROUP	DIFF ARAB GROUP	NON-ARAB
TOTAL	6,837	18.5	2.5	78.9	5,399	23.5	3.2	73.3
FULL ARAB	5,003	24.2	3.2	72.6	3,417	35.3	4.5	60.2
PART ARAB	1,834	3.0	0.7	96.3	1,982	3.1	1.0	95.9
U.S. BORN	4,348	12.6	1.7	85.8	4,149	13.7	2.3	84.0
FOREIGN BORN	2,487	29.0	4.0	67.0	1,253	55.9	6.2	37.9
LEBANESE	3,354	14.4	14.4	84.2	2,931	16.5	1.9	81.6
SYRIAN	1,515	17.8	17.8	78.9	1,309	20.6	3.7	75.8
ALL OTHER	1,968	26.2	26.2	69.9	1,159	44.5	5.9	49.6

Mixed Marriages Continued

Arab Americans tend to have high levels of English-language proficiency and high levels of education, even compared to Americans. In 1990, 97% of native born Arab Americans reported a high proficiency of the English language when compared to 94% of Americans and 64% of foreign born Arab Americans who reported this same level of proficiency. Of the latter

[12] Table: Kukczycki, Andrzej, and Arun Peter Lobo. 2002, 206.

group, 87% also reported speaking another language at home (Arabic) compared to 16% of native born Arab Americans.[13] With respect to education, 43% of foreign born and 40% of native born Arab American men reported a college or professional degree, and 26% of foreign born and 35% of native born Arab American women reported themselves as college graduates. The same year, only 24% of American men and 21% of American women reported earning a college degree.[14] English language proficiency and college education are two desirable qualities in marriages in general and especially for those in the United States choosing to marry into another ethnic group. Furthermore, these qualities allow Arab Americans to navigate professionally and obtain high positions in the private work place and within state and U.S government entities. These positions provide middle to middle-upper class income and in 1990 the median income for Arab Americans was $34,200 compared to the national median of $29,600.[15] Navigating through these positions and earning middle-class income also breaks down cultural and religious barriers, and these changes can also lead to interethnic marriages. A normal and somewhat expected outcome of interethnic marriages worthwhile exploring is the children of these marriages. Multiethnic, part-Arab children of these unions who are now university students are the primary focus of this study. Within interethnic Arab/non-Arab marriages, offspring are less likely to be reported as Arab, and so according to the 1990 study this finding suggests that "ethnic identification of children from intermarried couples can be optional in much the same way as it is for White Americans of European ancestry."[16]

I want to explore further this idea that ethnic identification can be optional for part-Arab university students, because it seems debatable whether the decision to identify as Arab is as

[13] Kukczycki, Andrzej, and Arun Peter Lobo. 2001, 466.
[14] Kukczycki, Andrzej, and Arun Peter Lobo. 2001, 466.
[15] Kukczycki, Andrzej, and Arun Peter Lobo. 2001, 467.
[16] Kukczycki, Andrzej, and Arun Peter Lobo. 2002, 208.

much of a malleable decision for part-Arab offspring as it is for non-Arab offspring. If this is true, it is important to acknowledge who is making this choice: the parent or the offspring. It is important to consider the implications of choosing how acculturated the individual of part-Arab ethnicity is to the mainstream American culture versus his or her heritage culture because this can substantially influence his or her ethnic identity and the ability to experience *identity achievement* and reach *identity affirmation* as an adult.

Identity

In general, children who raised to see themselves in a positive manner are likely to develop *identity achievement*, which refers to "cognitive processes of exploring and understanding the meaning of one's identity."[17] Another term cited often in the literature and key to this research, *identity affirmation*, refers to "the effective process of developing positive feelings and a strong sense of belonging to one's social group." For minority individuals, higher identity affirmation of the minority ethnicity strengthens self-esteem, increases positive self-concept, improves academic achievement and reduces mental health problems.[18] Identity achievement and identity affirmation, although possible in multiethnic young adults, provides the added complexity of having a third layer identity formation: that of ethnic identity. This *ethnic identity* or "the part of one's global identity that is tied to ethnic group membership, can become particularly salient in a university context."[19] One can theorize that achievement of an ethnic identity as it relates to adjustment of a bi-ethnic individual's self-identification label will prove

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[17] Ghavami, Negin, Adam Fingerhut, Letitia A. Peplau, Sheila K. Grant, and Michele A. Wittig. 2011. "Testing a model of minority identity achievement, identity affirmation, and psychological well-being among ethnic minority and sexual minority individuals." *Cultural Diversity And Ethnic Minority Psychology* 17, no. 1: 79-88.

[18] Ghavami, Negin., et. al., 79.

[19] Brittian, Aerika S., Adriana J. Umana-Taylor and Chelsea L. Derlan. 2013. "An Examination of Biracial College Youth's Family Ethnic Socialization, Ethnic Identity and Adjustment: Do Self-Identification Labels and University Context Matter?" *Cultural Diversity And Ethnic Minority Psychology* 19, no. 2: 177-189.

different compared to that of a non-bi-ethnic individual.[20] Parenting styles vary vastly in the United States generally speaking, but a part-Arab child may have an even more remarkably different upbringing compared to his or her peers because of differences such as foods consumed and music played in addition to languages used in the home, all aspects of one's early experiences that, as this study shows, link to a person's identity.

Acculturation may also affect parenting styles and adolescent behavior. Acculturation is the social, psychological and behavior process of the exploration of a varying degree of the keeping and maintaining of one's heritage culture (HC) and/or participation in the mainstream (MC). Acculturation is useful in learning about individuals exploring multiple cultural environments such as part-Arab university students and is experienced differently due to different external or internal factors. External factors include employment, school and community, otherwise known as environment for our purposes, and internal factors include ethnic identity and ethnic identity development.[21] During adolescence, children are navigating through their independence and attempting to understand their emerging identities. Not only do intergenerational differences affect a parent/adolescent relationship, but Arab American parents with multiethnic children face another layer of possible differences in issues such as education and careers, and family and friend relationships. Parents and adolescents who absorb different degrees of acculturation in a society respond to the society differently. Differing degrees of acculturation create different degrees of possibilities for behavior problems or clashes among these parent/adolescent units.

First generation Arab American parents with multiethnic second generation children are at a greater chance to absorb differing degrees of acculturation. It is normal for immigrants to

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[20] Brittain, Aerika S., et. al., 177.

[21] Goforth, Anisa N., Andy V. Pham, and Evyln R. Oka. 2015. "Parent-Child Conflict, Acculturation Gap, Acculturative Stress, and Behavior Problems in Arab American Adolescents." *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 46, no. 6, pp 821-822.

acculturate and assimilate along a spectrum. One study on Arab Americans found some adults maintain strong connections to White (Mainstream Culture) and also ethnic (Heritage Culture) identities while others created distance from the pan-ethnic Arab American identity and attempted to maintain strong ethnic identities.[22] As far as adolescents are concerned, another study found that they too describe their identities as polarized. Some said they were perceived or perceived themselves as "boaters," or, recent immigrants from the Arab world who strongly maintained their heritage culture while others were perceived or perceived themselves as "White," or adopting mainstream culture. In the middle of the spectrum were individuals who maintained their heritage background while embracing Westernized norms. The researchers described this group as participating in "selective Americanization or acculturation."[23] In this last group I find similarities to those part-Arab university students who describe an identity as "fully mixed" rather than half of one ethnicity and half of another. Perhaps another way to look at participating in a fully mixed identity is through *transnational identity*. Situating oneself within a transnational identity means that one is not confined to geographical borders and a duel consciousness evolves, combining multiple real and imagined spaces.[24]

Yet another study found that adolescents and their parents reported similar mainstream cultural orientation and heritage cultural orientation, and although not a significant difference, more adolescents reported higher mainstream American cultural orientation than their parents and their parents reported higher heritage cultural orientation than their offspring. This finding differs from previous immigration studies on mainstream and heritage cultures. This finding supports my argument that environmental factors highly influence identity formation because

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[22] Arjrouch, K.J., and A. Jamal. 2007. Assimilating to a White identity: The case of Arab Americans. *International Migration Review*, 41, p 860.

[23] Ajrouch, K.J. 2000. Place, age, and culture: Community living and ethnic identity among Lebanese American adolescents. *Small Group Research*, 31, 447.

[24] el-Sayed and el-Aswad, p 115.

reporting similar mainstream and heritage cultural orientation occurred in a sample of participants from a community in the United States who consisted of a large population of Muslim Arab Americans. Participants of this study lived in a community that valued Arab culture and in which adolescents were socialized in a community that had many characteristics of their heritage culture. Immigrants and multiethnic adolescents growing up in a community which encourages a maintenance of native and heritage culture can provide protective factors such as support or cultural and religious orientation.[25] Alternatively, parents and adolescents who have large gaps from one another between their acculturation of heritage culture and mainstream culture are more inclined to stress, psychological and behavioral problems, in addition to confusion in identity formation. For example, scholars found ethnic identity conflict in Arab adolescents who were more oriented to their Arab culture (heritage culture) than their parents. These individuals "experienced stress individually" and reported having acculturative experiences vastly different from their parents, and this led to problems, possibly in the realm of identity achievement and affirmation.[26]

Navigating the heritage and mainstream cultures for Arab American women and by extension, part-Arab women, can be particularly difficult when it comes to sexuality and marriage. One researcher recalled the following from growing up in a bicultural (American/Arab) context where the heritage culture was seen much more positively than the mainstream culture. Arab ethnicity represented a positive association with family values and hospitality whereas the mainstream American culture was represented negatively, seen as trashy, morally degenerate and highly sexualized.[27] Sexuality as a theme in acculturation and

[25] Goforth, Anisa A., et al, 831.
[26] Goforth, Anisa A., et al, 822.
[27] Naber, Nadine. 2006. Arab American Femininities: Beyond Arab Virgin, American(ized) Whore. *Feminist Studies*, 32, no. 1, 87.

assimilation tends to be disproportionately placed on daughters. Navigating through this theme within acculturation can be challenging when trying to develop one's sense of self. Daughters rejecting the idealized role of Arab womanhood can come across as rejection of the culture all together and signify cultural loss, thus negatively impacting her role and prominence in the family. With polarized images of the "Arab good girl and the American(ized) bad girls," navigating through this aspect of acculturation for Arab American parents and their daughters, even those who shared similar mainstream and heritage culture orientation, can lead to a binary breakdown with respect to sexuality, gender and family values.[28] For part-Arab daughters born into multiethnic marriages, being "Arab" versus "being American" or another nationality can be regulated by knowing what is "`abe (shameful)" and navigating this "selfhood" of the self and the Other or Arab vs. American can lead to an unstable understanding of the female identity as a multiethnic individual.

I argue that the same theories can be extended to the cohort of part-Arab university students because these students are also navigating acculturation between Arab (heritage culture) and mainstream culture or their other ethnic side in general. The environment in which the parents raise the child and parental attachment to the heritage culture or mainstream culture inevitably impacts the child's navigation of his or her own acculturation to the mainstream and heritage cultures.

White Passing and *Al-Ghourba*

As previously reviewed, ethnic identity of the children of intermarried Arab/non-Arab couples may be "optional" and these individuals are less likely to be reported as Arab on official documents. Arab Americans, and particularly mixed Arab Americans, are likely to be fairer

[28] Naber, Nadine, 91-92.

skin-toned and indistinguishable from White Americans of European ancestry. As children age and navigate through adolescence, the appearance of looking white and being white can ease them through difficult societal pressures that come with aging so that *white passing* becomes a natural part of life. *Passing* "blurs the carefully marked lines of race…and class, calling attention to ways in which identity categories intersect, overlap, construct and deconstruct one another." [29]

Sometimes it is the parents who choose to identify more strongly with the mainstream culture in order to attempt to ease the cultural immersion for themselves, their family, and their children's way of life. Although this practice often proves successful for first generation immigrants, it does not always prove the same for second and third generations. Another option is that the child or adolescent himself feels the desire or pressure to fit into the mainstream culture and chooses this passing as a strategy for acculturation. This kind of navigation is crucial for the child to reach positive identity affirmation as a young adult, and parents, family and peers are strong influences in this interwoven navigation of mainstream and heritage cultures. Alternatively, it happens that the mainstream society assumes whiteness, and the individual chooses not to correct the identification. Some may argue with this last category, asserting that the individual in fact may not have a choice in cultural identity because it is assigned and ascribed as a result of arbitrary social divisions.[30] I argue that the option to choose which part of one's ethnic heritage to identify with is at the same time both beneficial and disruptive to identity development.

On the one hand, individuals who are part-Arab and pass as white may not actually be making an individual choice, but rather taking on a societal assumption and way of coding an individual. On official documents, Arab ethnicity is most often not an option so that the individual is forced to select White or Other. When individuals allow themselves to be

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[29] Schlossberg, Linda and Maria Carla. 2001. *Passing: Identity and Interpretation in Sexuality, Race, and Religion*. New York: New York University Press, p: 2.
[30] Kroeger, Brooke. 2003. *Passing: When people Can't Be Who They Are. Public Affairs*, New York. p: 32.

acculturated into the mainstream society, it eases pressures and avoids drawing attention to an "otherness." Thus, part-Arab university students who find themselves in this position are relinquished of the pressures of the "Arab" stereotype in a post 9/11 and "America First" mainstream society of the United States, and this release may actually positively guide these individuals through identity development. This realm reduces the pressures associated with "the other" within a mainstream society and helps avoid ambiguity of how a person sees himself/herself. On the other hand, participating in white passing, either voluntarily or involuntarily, may lead to cultural ambiguity, confusion about identity and loss of cultural connection. Living within this middle space where the lines of identity are blurry and eluding is especially difficult when the society views the individual's heritage culture as threatening. The dissolved or diminished heritage identity can create a type of "double exile," meaning that the individual feels alienation and a lack of connection to both the homeland and the diaspora.[31]

Al-ghourba is an Arabic word used to describe feelings of alienation and of missing the homeland. It can occur when Arab immigrants find themselves moving from the majority to the minority in the mainstream society. Arab American immigrants who already have feelings of al-ghourba as a result of being away from the Middle East may experience a sort of "doubled exile" as a result of American sentiment towards Arabs after the September 11 attacks and now the present political atmosphere emphasized by Donald Trump. This second type of exile comes with discrimination against stereotypes based on constructs such race, ethnicity, religion, dress, and the inability to speak English, and forces assimilation into the mainstream culture. I believe that Arab immigrant parents who marry non-Arabs may also inadvertently pass along this concept of al-ghourba to their mixed offspring while trying to protect them from discrimination from their heritage culture. Traditions and language learning may be lost in the attempts to assimilate into mainstream culture and as a result, the loss of attachment to the Arab ethnicity

[31] el-Sayed and el-Aswad, The Dynamics of Identity Reconstruction among Arab Communities in the United States.

can lead to stronger feelings of al-ghourba and longing for understanding of the Arab heritage and culture.

September 11, 2001

For part-Arab university students growing up in the United States in the early 2000s, perceiving themselves positively as ethnically Arab may have helped them establish a sense of belonging and acceptance in a society where many Americans hold negative views of people who are ethnically Arab.

Dearborn, Michigan, a Detroit suburb, is home to the most densely populated Arab community in the United States. People of Arab ethnicity have migrated to the city since the 1880s and so over the years, Arab residents in Michigan established an American middle/ middle-upper-class lifestyle through prosperous business ownership, churches and mosques and even bipartisan patronage connecting Arab Americans to power through local city and state offices and federal funding and protection.[32] When, after 9/11, the United States government instilled a homeland security program in the city, its citizens did not know whether the program would protect them or alternatively, surveil them. When the Dearborn police chief traveled to Israel on a police delegate engagement to understand Israeli counterterrorism, one could assume that the knowledge gained would be for policing his own city[33]. Arab American citizens of Detroit and Dearborn responded to 9/11 in different ways by entering what was nothing short of a "state of emergency." Very soon after the attacks, the American population targeted the thriving Arab population through threats and attacks by means of Othering and the neighborhoods were separated by fear. Within hours, the community was turned back "100

[32] Shryock, Andrew. 2002. "New Images of Arab Detroit: Seeing Otherness and Identity through the Lens of September 11." *American Anthropologist*, 103, no.3: p 917.

[33] Al-Malki, Amal Mohammed and David Kaufer. 2009. "The War on Terror through Arab-American Eyes: The Arab-American Press as a Rhetorical Counterpublic." *Rhetoric Review*, 28, no. 1: p 49.

years" as a result of the September 11 attacks. Immediately following the tragedy, Arab residents of Dearborn, especially Muslims, experienced discrimination, Othering and marginalization and struggled to recreate the identity of the outstanding citizen they had previously earned over the past hundred years.[34] The Arab community divided itself as Arabic speaking Maronite Catholics sought to distance themselves from their Arab Muslim neighbors and drew connections from the 9/11 attacks to Christian persecution in the Middle East while vocalizing that they, the Christians, were not involved in terrorism. As a symbol and representation of United States patriotism, Arab residents displayed American flags all over the community, including grocery corner stores, liquor stores, and private residences.[35] This talisman became one attempt to stay connected nationally to the United States without forfeiting ethnic heritage. Writing and publishing literature became another outlet for expressing a contradictory connection to being nationally American, yet ethnically Arab. "First Writing Since," a poem by Palestinian poet Suhair Hammad, captured her shared nationality with the victims of 9/11 and her shared ethnicity with the hijackers:

> *…Never felt less American and more Brooklyn than these days. These stars and stripes represent the dead citizens first, not family, not lovers. My skin is real thin. My eyes are darker. The future holds little light. My baby brother is a man now. On alert, praying five times a day. The orders he will take are righteous and not weigh his soul down from the afterlife. Both my brothers, my heart stops. Not a beat disturbs my fear. Muslim. Gentile. Men. Born in Brooklyn and their faces are of the Arab man. All eyelashes, and nose and beautiful color and stubborn hair. What will their lives be like now? Over there is over here...*[36]

Mizna, an Arab American literary journal, published a series of poems, short stories, and essays after 9/11 that revolved around the theme of Arab American identity and residents' and

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[34] Shryock, Andrew, 917.
[35] Shryock, Andrew, 918.
[36] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FDyLNgLHprI

citizens' relationship to Arab-Americanness and to Arab-ness in the Arab world. On the other hand, Arab Americans were suddenly thrust in the spotlight so that speaking out too loudly against the war on terror or American support for Israel caused them to fear their "suspicious" names would be given to American officials and written on a list of anti-American or anti-Semitic individuals.[37] The September 11th attacks, scholars have argued, brought to surface and strengthened the xenophobic sentiment that had long been instilled in the United States by polarizing it. The events of 9/11 forced America to face suppressed issues of foreign policy, immigration and minority rights and provided a platform for dividing positions.

On one end of the spectrum, those who sought to preserve "imperative patriotism" found a justification for doing so. *Imperative patriotism* is what author Steven Salaita termed for those patriots who view dissent in political governance and foreign affairs as unpatriotic due to non-conformity to what is at the nation's best interest.[38] "*Imperative*" indicates a sense of purpose and necessity and is tied to ideas of settlement. Hilton Obenzinger, American poet and professor at Stanford University, stated that early America adopted a sense of religious destiny/chosen person type of identity through investing "morally" in an independent New England settlement. Phrases that George W. Bush used to speak about the Iraq war exemplify rhetoric utilized in this type of patriotism. Claiming that the war on Iraq was a "war for civilization" and stating "either you are for us or against us" and "God is on America's side" are clear examples of Imperative Patriotism rhetoric as is Donald J. Trump's "America First" campaign and presidency[39]. On the other end of the spectrum, liberals and liberal arts scholars who have tended to support multiculturalism have used 9/11 xenophobia and racism against Arab Americans to support

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[37] Salaita, Steven. 2005. "Ethnic Identity and Imperative Patriotism: Arab Americans Before and After 9/11." *College Literature*, 32, no. 2, pp 152-153.
[38] Salaita, Steven. 154.
[39] Salaita, Steven. 154-155.

"cosmopolitanism and the retention of civil liberties." Ultimately, Imperative Patriotism and its xenophobic and Othering culture created by it provoked attacks on Arab Americans in the U.S in places such as Arab Detroit and its suburb Dearborn mentioned above and on those who were perceived as Arab Americans such as people from Central Asia, South Asia and Hispanics.[40]

Through extension, I argue that it also provoked attacks on children born to one Arab parent and one non-Arab parent and that these "attacks" on multiethnic children and their families, influenced the identity formation of these children who are now university age college students. This kind of Othering as a result of Imperative Patriotism can negatively impact a child's multiethnic construction of his or her identity. It can make it more difficult to identify as multiethnic and encourage navigation towards the desire to "fit in" or "pass" in a mainstream culture. It can make it complicated to embrace and enjoy the minority ethnic half and affect the loss of desire to pass on languages and traditions. Even more extreme, it can encourage undesired or forced assimilation of the parents and grandparents' ethnic minority into the majority culture, stripping the maturing child from a whole half of his or her identity. Through this extension to part-Arab university students who were also affected by the events on 9/11, I consider articles and research on full Arab Americans of equal impact and relevance for the purposes of the remainder of the paper.

Language and Identity

For part-Arab university students in the United States speaking English as a first language, communicating to Arab family members and peers in Arabic can help bridge a gap felt by living far away from the Middle East or North Africa. For the country of Lebanon, Arabic and French are intertwined with Lebanese national identity. Favor for standard Arabic (related

[40] Salaita, Steven, 158.

to pan-Arabism) and colloquial Arabic (related to inward-turning Lebanese nationalism) exists within Lebanese national identity. A unique marker for these two distinct views is tied to religion. Leaning toward support of Modern Standard Arabic and pan-Arabism are those of Islamic faith, whereas those of Christian-Maronite faith tend towards inward-Lebanese nationalism with the use of colloquial Arabic marking identity.[41] Identity is said to be as much about inclusion as it is about exclusion, is considered a "project of the Self," and cannot ignore otherness and speaking about difference, including language as a link to identity. For example, the pan-Arab identity takes meaning only when slated against nation-state identity. Using fuSHa (Modern Standard Arabic) acquires meaning in identity construction when contrasted with colloquial dialects. Code-switching also fits within the paradigm as it acquires meaning when slated against more standard ways of speaking. Symbolic meaning emerges as "otherness" structures the Self.[42] English also fits this mold, as the "official English" debate in the United States exists within the framework of political identity and the question of who is American (us/in) and who is not (them/out). The early 20th century saw an "Americanization" movement in which immigrants aimed to achieve high English proficiency due to ideology of homogeneity as language is deeply seated in ethnicity in the United States within its politics of identity.[43] The pervasiveness of language as a universal form of communication allows for the notion of adjustments or construction of personal identity as a linguistic identity in addition to the aforementioned ethnic identity. The dynamism of linguistic identity proves especially relevant

[41] Suleiman, Yasir. 2003. *The Arabic Language and National Identity*. Georgetown University Press, Washington, D.C.:204-205.
[42] Suleiman, Yasir. 2011. *Arabic, Self, and Identity*. Oxford University Press, New York, New York: 71.
[43] Pavlenko, Aneta and Adrian Blackledge, eds. 2004. *Negotiation of Identities in Multilingual Contexts*. Multilingual Matters, Tonawanda, NY:71.

for the bilingual or multilingual individual for whom language choice signals the speaker's preference, whether or not an unconscious one.[44]

Language crossing refers to choosing to talk one way or with one language over another at any given time to allow speakers to "change footing" within the same conversation. Crossing languages gives speakers the ability to perform cultural acts of identity.[45] In a similar scope, *code-switching* allows for change to one or all of the three core linguistic systems in one conversation: phonology, syntax and lexicon. Language crossing and code-switching, as methods of communication with family and peers, serve as integral concepts in answering how language affects ethnic identity formation among part-Arab university students.

Psychosocial development researcher, Erik Erikson, created the ego identity theory which suggests that forming successful identity development directly relates to positive outcomes during adolescence. The process by which individuals "explore" their identity helps them maneuver through their beliefs, goals and values by speaking with family and friends, reading books, listening to music or even visiting places to which individuals feel strong tied. This process of exploration helps lead individuals to "commitment" where they develop a sense of internalizing their own role with relationship to the broader society.[46] As previously mentioned, scholarship suggests that people with multiethnic connections have more questions about their identity and belonging, yet exploring and understanding the minority ethnicity can serve as a sturdy pillar for adjustment and lead to developing positive feelings and a greater sense of belonging within their ethnic group.[47] With respect to this current study, strong familiar relations

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[44] Nino-Murcia, Mercedes and Jason Rothman. 2008. *Bilingualism and identity: Spanish at the crossroads with other languages*. Studies in Bilingualism. J. Benjamin's Publishing.

[45] Kramsch, Claire. 2000. *Language and Culture*. Oxford University Press.

[46] Poinsett, M. K. (2011). *Collective identification in arab american emerging adults: Does affirmation to ethnic, national, family and religious groups predict positive adjustment?*

[47] Ghavami, Negin., et. al., 79.

proved essential in contributing to part-Arab students' reaching this identity achievement and identity affirmation.

Scholarship also suggests that multilingual adolescents have additional identity struggles as they must incorporate the dimension of speaking multiple languages in a society where a multiethnic adolescent will likely interact with apathetic peers who have little interest in learning about their ethnic identity.[48] However, as Erikson suggested, visiting locations tied with individuals' ethnicities may strengthen their sense of identity, thus a bilingual part-Arab student who visits his or her parent's homeland, will have the opportunity to connect on a linguistic level in addition to a cultural level. Alternatively, scholarship notes that refusal to learn the minority language creates an association of risking losing an understanding to the minority culture.[49] As this current study suggests, this strengthening of identity may also take place if the student grows up in a location where people speak the minority language, such as speaking Spanish in Texas.

Lastly, scholarship demonstrates that language, and code-switching and/or language crossing between two languages stands for something larger than grouping oneself into a bilingual category. Code-switching links the speaker and listener to their ethnic and social identities.[50] It also represents a marked choice in a conversation by which the speaker negotiates a position of interactional power.[51] This position of interactional power suggests positive association through a multiethnic person's ability to communicate effectively within his or her minority ethnicity. As seen with this research, when part-Arab students code-switch, language

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[48] Caldas, Stephen J. 2007. "Changing Bilingual Self-Perceptions from Early Adolescence to Early Adulthood: Empirical Evidence from a Mixed-Methods Case Study." *Applied Linguistics* 29, no. 2: 290-311.

[49] Greer, Tim. 2001. "Multi-Faceted identities Among Biracial Japanese." *Japan Journal of Multilingualism and Multiculturalism* 7, no. 1: 8.

[50] Auer, Peter. 2005. "A postscript: code-switching and social identity." Journal of Pragmatics 37, 404.

[51] Myers-Scotton, Carol. 1988. "Self-Enhancing Codeswitching as Interactional Power." *Language and Communication* 8, no.3/4: 199.

cross, or communicate effectively in Arabic with a member of their Arab family, they develop strengthened relations to their Arab ethnicity.

Language Learning

Within the prevue of this study is heritage language learners and heritage language education. Although a unified and precise definition of the term *heritage language learner* (HLL) has yet to be agreed upon, it has been deemed as essential to construct as HLL programs develop. That said, a *heritage language learner* is loosely defined as the following:

> *(1) those students who have a personal ancestral connection to a non-societal language (i.e., a heritage language) and some degree of proficiency (however minimal) in this language, and (2) students who also have a personal ancestral connection to the non-societal language but no proficiency whatsoever.*[52]

In the field of applied linguistics, heritage language education aims to provide proper and appropriate educational practice to the above described individuals.[53] Linguists and scholars differentiate between kinds of language educating, noting that language education for heritage language learners (HHL) and second language learners (L2) have different needs due to their differing backgrounds. Some scholars are in the camp advocating for separate classrooms for these two types of language learners, whereas others are in the camp of merging the two. At the heart of the issue is the wide range definition of a heritage language learner, and because of the extent of potential fluency in a heritage student, it is necessary to dissect these categories further. For example, Spanish language courses for "typical" second-generation bilingual students who self-identify as native Spanish speakers have proven successful in secondary and postsecondary educational settings for formal register literacy skills.[54] However, for those heritage language

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[52] Valdes, Guadalupe. 2017. "From language maintenance and intergenerational transmission to language survivance: will "heritage language" education help or hinder?" *IJSL*, 243: 71.

[53] Valdes, Guadalupe, 71.

[54] Lynch, Andrew. 2008. "The Linguistic Similarities of Spanish Heritage and Second Language Learners." *Foreign Language Annals*, 40: 252.

learners who are not second-generation bilingual, but perhaps part of the increasing number of third and fourth generation heritage language learners who typically lack the fluency of second-generation students, it may be appropriate to consider these students more closely related to second language learners (L2) linguistically and educationally speaking.[55] For this reason, by extension, it is permissible to consider children born into multiethnic and multilingual households, such as the part-Arab university students in this study, as part of this latter group due to the typical loss of the heritage language in the household during childhood.

A 2006-2007 study at the University of Arizona of basic bilingual Spanish students enrolled in two types of classes (heritage language heritage/HLH vs heritage language foreign/HLF in an L2 course) reported on significant findings. In writing accuracy, the HLF group performed better in number (94%) and gender agreement (78%) and showed improvement in subject-verb agreement (86%) compared to the HLH group who demonstrated accuracy in number agreement at 91%, gender agreement at 75%, and subject-verb agreement at 91%. Because less emphasis was given to written and grammar instruction in the HLH course than the HLF course, the accuracy percentages are reasonable. However, although the HLH course emphasized the speaking mode over the HLF course and overall saw more improvement, HLH students did not always outperform HLF students.[56]

A 2008 study aimed to identify similarities of the speaking mode among self-identified heritage language learners (HLL) and second language learners (L2) at the intermediate and advanced levels, and to provide suggestions for language educators. All nine participants were at varying degrees of Spanish/English bilingual and enrolled in intermediate and advanced level Spanish heritage language courses at the University of Miami. Five of the participants identified as Hispanic or Latino, and their grasp of Spanish was standard for second and third generation of lower range Spanish proficiency. Four participants identified themselves as non-Hispanic and

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[55] Lynch, Andrew, 253.

[56] Beaudrie, S. 2006. "Spanish heritage language development: A casual-comparative study exploring the differential effects of heritage versus foreign language curriculum." Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Arizona, Tucson.

were representative of oral capabilities and social exposure to Spanish for L2 speakers residing in Miami and began L2 Spanish education after the age of 12, sometimes argued as a critical age cut-off for language acquisition. No family members spoke Spanish at home compared to the heritage language learners whose parents spoke Spanish at home on a daily basis. Ultimately heritage language learners and L2 learners of this advanced level Spanish did not vary significantly in their grammatical and lexical levels. Alternatively, one of the main features marking linguistic similarity among the two groups was social in nature: how did they interact with Spanish outside the classroom? Both groups who spoke Spanish in social settings, whether at home, with friends or at work showed common grammatical and lexical levels in the speaking mode.[57]

The study suggests that future studies should explore social issues related to identity negotiation in order to better understand common ground among heritage language learners and second language learners (L2s). The study also concluded and contributed to the research the idea that similarities exist among heritage language learners and L2s and that what is fundamentally different can vary from one learner to the next according to his or her amount of social exposure to the target language. Both types of learners also have differences in their underlying grammars (a construct based on structuralist ideology), and a heritage language learner's influence to his or her underlying grammar could be a result in attrition of the language rather than lack of acquisition. This study suggests the need for further research on language instruction designed around relearning or retrieving lost structures of the target language as often is the case for first generation heritage language learners compared to language instruction for students learning the language elements for the first time. Additionally, language instruction for those heritage language learners who have an advanced grasp of the knowledge should be focused on reading and discussing more abstract topics such as global events and human rights, and should have characteristics of a monolingual language arts college course.[58]

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[57] Lynch, Andrew, 270-271.
[58] Lynch, Andrew, 274

Heritage language education cannot neglect the social, cultural and to a certain extent, class make up of its students and incorporate features of the culture associated with the target language into the language learning instruction. Yet another study performed in 2017 argued against curricularizing language learning by treating it as an academic subject because when language is curricularized, it no longer becomes a naturally and socially acquired species-unique system of communication, but rather an ordered and sequenced academic subject tested artificially and where learners of the target language outnumber proficient speakers.[59]

For part-Arab university students who are, by the loose definition, heritage language learners, there are additional layers of complexity associated with target language acquisition or re-acquisition for language educators. One of the additional layers incorporates the undeniable and important connection of language to ethnic identity development. Often assumed among language educators is the notion that a multiethnic child must select the identity of only one parent. When multiethnic children in the U.S. are English monolinguals, educators assume uniformity about ethnic identity issues that their mono-ethnic peers deal with.[60] Because language is so closely linked to ethnic identity, multiethnic students may develop a strong desire to achieve a native-like command of languages of both ethnicities (heritages) in order to navigate fluidly and feel accepted by the communities of their choice, and thus this belongingness aids in positive self-concepts and reaching identity achievement. A 1997 study of bilingual multiethnic students versus monolingual multiethnic students confirmed findings of previous research that although both groups experienced challenges of identities in an ethnically conscious society, bilingual multiethnic students found more support for identity development towards positive self-identities than their monolingual counterparts. As a result of bilingualism as a resource, challenges shifted from struggles of racial identity to challenges associated with gender and sexual orientation, age, and religion. These students also reported "feeling more" of the ethnicity

[59] Valdes, Guadalupe, 77-78

[60] Pao, Dana, Shelley Wong and Sharon Teuben-Rowe. 1997. "Identity Formation for Mixed-Heritage Adults and Implications for Educators" TESOL Quarterly, 31: 622-623.

associated with the language and that it helped provide a means by which to achieve social acceptance. Family behavior and attitudes towards bilingualism, multiculturalism, and customs from the minority parent largely influenced identity formation among the participants of the study. Families of participants who either directly or indirectly encouraged children to identify with both cultures helped to instill a positive sense of self.[61] Conclusions and recommendations from the study for educators included encouraging students' families to maintain home languages, cultures, and traditions while residing in an English-speaking mainstream environment. Furthermore, educators should provide parents with current research findings about how home languages impact children's lives throughout adolescence and into adulthood. Additionally, educators with multiethnic children in their classrooms need to create and implement curricula that respect diversity in race, ethnicity, language, religion, age, and sexual orientation.[62]

Another layer of complexity for language education in heritage language learners of the target language of Arabic in part-Arab university students is the complexity of the ideology of teaching the Arabic language. One of the unique features of heritage language education and second language education of Arabic, compared to other target languages, is the existence of regional, country and even city specific Arabic dialects in addition to Modern Standard Arabic, or fuSHa, for the purposes of this study. This layer creates an additional challenge within heritage language learning in multiethnic individuals. Because of the vast and numerous dialects of the Arabic language found throughout Arab world, it is very difficult to match the dialect of the Arab parent to an Arabic language classroom for a group of part-Arab students whose parents' vary greatly in Arab nationality and also in speaking an Arabic dialect inside or outside of the home. This additional challenge should be considered for incorporation for future studies as it is an area lacking research and classroom implementation with respect to multiethnic heritage language learners.

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[61] Pao, Dana, et. al., 626.
[62] Pao, Dana, et. al., 629-630.

Chapter 3

A Study

The current study sought to understand factors influencing identity development in university students who ethnically identified as part-Arab, meaning that the students were born to one parent who identified as ethnically Arab and the other parent did not. The research inquired about the importance of the Arabic language to relating to the Arab ethnicity, and about the environmental and biological factors that influenced the ability for this multiethnic cohort to reach *identity affirmation*, which provides a path for developing positive feelings and a strong sense of belonging to one's social group. Data in this study maintained the required anonymity, and so in reporting the data, anonymity was also maintained. Where necessary, pseudonyms were used to avoid ambiguity.

Recruitment and Data Gathering

In order to conduct this qualitative research study, I recruited university students from a large public state university located in the U.S. southwest. Only students who self-identified as ethnically part-Arab, as having one parent who identifies as Arab and another parent who does not identify as Arab, were included. The students were also multilingual to a varying degree, speaking English and Arabic and/or Spanish or another language. These students considered English as their first language. As a teaching assistant in the Arabic language department at the university, I recruited students by reaching out to a team of professors who taught years one, two, or three of the three-year Arabic language sequence. As a result, participants were in the relatively early phases of learning the Arabic language. Participant recruitment also took the snowball form of "by word of mouth" in that recruited participants were asked if they knew a friend who also wanted to participate. These students also had varying degrees of Arabic language knowledge, leveled from beginner to intermediate high. Additionally, I placed

recruitment flyers in professors' mailboxes in the Department of Middle Eastern Studies and was invited to recruit in one professor's classroom. Ultimately, ten university students who identified as part-Arab agreed to participate in the study. They each received a copy of the informed consent form explaining the purpose of the study in the first group email, late November 2017. Consent was verbally acknowledge by agreeing to participate in focus groups and individual interviews. The ethnographic and religious breakdown is as follows: half of the students recruited were Christian/Lebanese (5), one (1) Christian/Palestinian, one (1) loosely Christian (Coptic)/Egyptian, one (1) Muslim/Libyan, and two (2) Lebanese non-practicing religion. Table 1 lists specific demographics and language knowledge of the participants.

Students first completed a series of questions about their language and identity from a questionnaire modified to cater to half-Arab participants.[63] I emailed the questionnaire prior to the focus group and students completed and returned the questionnaire at the time of the focus group. Due to scheduling, I conducted two focus groups, both lasting two hours. The first focus group consisted of three university students whereas the second focus group consisted of five university students. Two students were unable to attend either focus group, however one of these students returned the questionnaire via email, whereas the other student returned both the questionnaire and focus group questions via email. I conducted the two focus groups in the same conference room located in the Department of Middle Eastern Studies and took verbal permission to audio record each focus group. The focus group questions expand upon the concepts highlighted in the questionnaire (see copies of these forms in the appendices). In January and February, 2018, I conducted individual follow up interviews with nine of the ten participants, as one student was attending medical school in a different city.

[63] Metoki, Joanna Yuka. "Analysis of the Correlation between Language Attitudes and Identity Perceptions among Japanese-American Heritage Language Speakers and Learners: An Examination of a Student Focus Group." University of California, Los Angeles, 2012. I referenced the questionnaire in this study to develop the one used in mine.

Table 2: Participant Demographics

Student's Self Identification	Father's Ethnicity	Mother's Ethnicity	Arabic Language Proficiency 1-5	Years of Formal Arabic Language	Relationship to the Arabic word "الغربة"
White or Other Age 21 Senior	Swedish	Egyptian	Reading: 3 Writing: 3 Speaking: 3 Listening: 3.5	Two years Egyptian Arabic	Arabic movies or movies makes me feel it sometimes.
Hispanic Arab Hispanic or Arab Age 20 Junior	Cuban	Lebanese	Reading: 3/3.5 Writing: 3/3.5 Speaking: 2/3 Listening: 3/4	Two years Arabic (4 years Spanish)	"Alienation" resonates strongly. Struggle with white-passing but also feeling not "white" culturally. Feel alienated because not understood by others and don't understand self either to a certain extent.
American Christian Palestinian Age 22 Senior	German American	Christian Palestinian	Reading: 2 Writing: 2 Speaking: 2 Listening: 2	One year	I see the word as translating to "The Arab." (student mis-translated the word)
White Age 19 Freshman	White	White Culturally Lebanese	Reading: 2 Writing: 2 Speaking: 2 Listening: 2	Half a year	No response recorded
Lebanese Age 21 Junior	Lebanese	American	Reading: 2 Writing: 2 Speaking: 2 Listening: 2	Half a year	Meaning unknown

Table 2 (continued)

Lebanese Age 20 Sophomore	Lebanese	American	Reading: 3 Writing: 2 Speaking: 3 Listening: 3/4	One year	No response recorded
Arab and White Age 26 Grad Student	Lebanese	Irish American (white)	Reading: 3 Writing: 3 Speaking: 3 Listening: 4	Less than one year	Known it as "weird", learned it as "alienation" in Arabic class. There is a sense of longing/desire that comes with living in diaspora, but never understood it as الغربة
Lebanese and Hispanic Age 21 Senior	Lebanese	Hispanic	Reading: 3 Writing: 2 Speaking: 2 Listening: 3	Two years	Learned it in class. During focus group, remembered meaning as "homesickness" and feeling of being alienated from one's homeland.
Lebanese and Peruvian Age 21 Senior	Lebanese	Peruvian	Reading: 1 Writing: 1 Speaking: 2 Listening: 2	N/A	Can't read Arabic
Arab-American Age 22 Graduate Student	Arab (Libyan)	American	Reading: 2 Writing: 2 Speaking: 2 Listening: 2	One and a half years	I felt alienated when I was younger, but I think I've grown as a person because of that and so I no longer feel that alienation.

*Students self-identified and self-assessed all of the above information

Family Relations

Students responded to several of questions related to family background, peer relationships, ethnic identity, multilingual proficiency and the dynamics shared within and among each of these categories. Nine of the ten students were born in the United States and the one student born outside the U.S. did not consider herself American as neither parent was

American. Arab ethnicity fell on their father's lineage for six students and on their mother's lineage for four students. Eight of the ten students had visited their Arab parents' place of birth with their families at one point in their childhood and spent time with their Arab relatives. They reported this time as being significantly memorable and definitive in conceptualizing their Arab ethnicity as part of their identity, regardless of their age at the time of the visit. The two students who had not yet visited planned to visit in the near future. Every student reported a high interest in the traditions, history, and customs of their roots in addition to the importance of Arabic language to his or her life in general and seven of the ten students were currently enrolled in Arabic language courses. Students reported having a close connection with elderly Arab relatives, listening to music in Arabic and/or Spanish, or eating Arab and/or Hispanic foods in order to further connect to their parents' roots. A high correlation of being in the young adulthood stage of life and embracing one's multi-ethnic background occurred among all ten students. Students reported stronger connections to their Arab ethnicities after high school, with the majority of higher Arab identity acceptance taking place during the college years. Distancing from their part-Arab side primarily occurred during elementary and middle schools years when students "wanted to fit in" or "didn't tell people a parent was Arab" or simply embraced "American culture" much more. The evidence also points to the Erkison's ego identity theory in that traveling to the country of the students' ethnicities as well as listening to music helped create positive association to the Arab ethnic identity. The home environment proved critical for students' positive connection to their part-Arab identity even though all but one student were born and primarily raised in the United States.

Travel to the Arab country of native origin was reported to be a pivotal point of influence for these part-Arab students. Eight of the ten students had visited at least once in their lifetime,

and the two who had not yet visited had plans to do so sometime during 2018. A few students reported repeated visits during their childhood, such as during summer and winter vacations. One student's first visit was for her baptism at the age of two. For another student, a recent visit to Lebanon with his father and brother positively helped him negotiate a particularly confusing time in his young adulthood. During this difficult time "it's nice to have a cultural identity that is different from other people and so I am embracing my roots." In 2017, this student's visit to Lebanon "changed my self-identity a lot" as a result of visiting Maharisas and Notre Dames and he felt a more religious connection incorporated with his Lebanese ethnicity with this visit. It also changed his perspective on the mainstream culture in which he had spent his developing formal years. "I disliked the U.S a lot more because the culture over there is a lot friendlier. Come back here and it's like every person for themselves and it's a big difference in self-identity from over there and here." This student brought back some relics from his travels to remind him of his Lebanese heritage.

Figure 1: Lebanese Cedar Tree

بهذه العلامة تنتصر
"with this emblem, victory"

Figure 2: Lebanese Map Plaque

شرف، تضحية، وفاء
"honor, sacrifice, loyalty"

Figure 3: Lebanese Navy Plaque

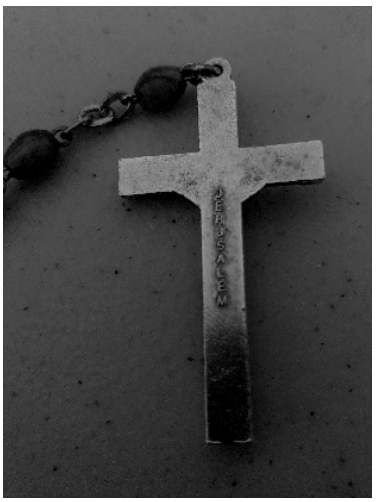
القوات البحرية
The Navy

He ended his thought on travel by remarking on how much family is valued in the Arab world. "People think it's weird that you're grown and still living with parents; my 30 something cousin is about to move out because he's getting married and no one bats an eye." Many

students remarked about the connection they feel with their family and importance of sticking together.

One student spoke about his experience traveling to Palestine with his family in 2011. Although the visit was relatively short, he reported that this religiously motivated trip strongly influenced his Palestinian ethnicity, the relationship with his grandmother, and also redefined how he viewed the mainstream American culture with respect to Israeli/American political relations. "I had never seen my grandmother so excited before. We visited my grandfather's old house and I felt a lot closer from an identity perspective because I got to see it and see what we lost and that was the first time I had experienced that kind of discrimination for being Arab, especially because I don't look Arab, but because I was with a group of Palestinians, we got profiled…but how threatening does my grandmother look really? I mean, come one, we all have US passports." This student also brought back memorabilia, which represented a symbol of connectivity to his Palestinian identity. For this student, travel to his mother's side of the family's homeland provided a clarifying experience and a chance for him to connect deeper to his Palestinian roots. Travel to the region also instigated the experience of discrimination as a result of his Arab ethnicity for the first time in his life. Part-Arab students who are coded by the mainstream society as white in the United States, may experience a variety of emotions and feelings upon travel to a part of the Arab world where ethnic and secular difference leads to discrimination and violence. These experiences, albeit seemingly negative, may lead to a sense of solidarity within the minority ethnicity, and upon returning to the mainstream culture may aide in the navigation of the individual's multiethnic identity.

Figure 4: Jerusalem Rosary
Anointed on Stone of Unction



Environmental and Biological Influences on Identity

9/11

Although all ten students were under the age of ten, with the majority under the age of 5, when the 9/11 attacks occurred in the United States, several students reported residual discrimination against their families or themselves as a result of heightened anti-Arab or Arab-looking prejudices that had exponentially increased immediately following the event. Even if the students were not directly negatively impacted after the event, they reported greater self-awareness about their and their family's Arab ethnicity upon entering adolescence when learning about the event in school. One student reported overhearing his elementary school classmates discussing their parent's derogatory usage of a term to describe Muslim women wearing hijab, thus making a connection to his own family's cultural, if not religious, origin. Several students acknowledged that their fathers often got detained and questioned at airports because of their names, color of their skin, and/or passport affiliation with an Arab country. One student vividly remembered a questioning as a young child when a stuffed animal was ripped from her hands by a TSA officer, whereas another student stated that her father always plans for three hours between flights because of the anticipated holding. Another student reported verbal discrimination towards her non-Arab mother when she was told by another mother that she and

her whole family should be deported. Students reported Arab family members increasing American nationalism and patriotism as a result of September 11th. Diaspora family members placed American flags on cars and in yards to demonstrate support for the United States as their home. These reports are consistent with the literature reviewed of mainstream U.S societal sentiment about Arabs living in the United States after 9/11, as the literature described increased American patriotism through public display of flags as a use of a sort of talisman for American nationalism among Arab immigrants.

A few of the students spoke about how Christian Arab family members reiterated that their Christian faith was separate from the Muslim faith, distancing themselves religiously from their shared Arab ethnicity. These family members stressed that they were the "good Arabs" meaning that they were Christian and non-practitioners of the use of the Arabic term *jihad* (which by definition means struggle, but the term developed a negative connotation through Islamic extremism to mean the fight/kill against enemies of Islam). For some students, identifying as a Christian Arab helped lessen the burden of growing up in the U.S. surrounded by anti-Arab sentiment.

Students spoke about how negative sentiment about Arabs existed prior to 9/11, but that 9/11 somehow provided an outlet for vocalizing it outright. They connected the sentiment from nearly two decades ago to the sentiment resurfacing again today in relation to the immigration ban under Donald Trump's presidency. One student noted that these instances "were important to locate along a continuum of anti-Arab, anti-Muslim rhetoric in the United States because countering violence extremism, justified surveillance, spying in mosques, and the list of proposed banned Arab nations all preceded Trump's ban, but that he was, however, responsible for ramping (prejudice) up." This student further elaborated by stating that "if it doesn't affect you precariously, you're waiting for it to affect you."

For part-Arab students who grew up in a post 9/11 United States, living the experiences as young children, or studying the attacks in school impacted the way they navigated through their identities. As young adults now, under the current administration, these multiethnic

students exude the curiosity of learning about how their part-Arab ethnicity is directly impacted by the political decisions of administrations past and present from their non-Arab "side." For part-Arab students, present and past situations involving the Middle East/North Africa directly affect their families and have real implications for choosing how and where they live their lives. The environmental influence of the effects of the September 11 attacks, as well as the popular anti-Other rhetoric seen in today's United States administration inevitably impact the shaping of these students' identities.

White Passing and Al-ghourba

Students also connected navigating through the Arab prejudices in the United States as a result of 9/11 and present day discrimination heightened by the current administration to the concept of *passing*. As described in the reviewed literature, *passing* in the mainstream culture (MC) while suppressing the heritage culture (HC) either voluntarily or involuntarily can highly influence an individual's navigation through identity development. Part-Arab students interviewed repeatedly spoke about their experiences with *white passing* in the United States. Most students remarked that they passed involuntarily under the societal assumption because of the fair color of their skin. Although some students took issue with this kind of passing, other students acknowledged the kinds of affordances it provided them within the realm of anti-Arab rhetoric. Students reported their experiences with white passing as not always positive.

One student reported two experiences that came to mind in academic settings where the speakers assumed a white audience and the student took issue with the phrasing. Speaking out during this societal assumption may leave the part-Arab student feeling both vulnerable and empowered, but revealing one's "true identity" at this juncture can strengthen the relationship with his or her minority ethnicity. Another student remembered a time when revealing his part-Arab identity during a debate at work was "timed poorly" and disrupted the work environment. He described the challenge it brings to his life: "I had to bring it up and it backfired on me and disrupted the work environment. It makes me want to follow up more [on what's happening in

the region] because of the kind of news we get here. It's hard because I get emotional about politics." A similar response came from another student with respect to media prescribing Arabs a certain way. "The reason you think I'm not Arab is because of the representation you see. You don't think I look Arab because you have a stereotype of what Arabs look like." Two students reported an instance they experienced as passing under societal assumption while at a Trump rally. Rally participants spoke directly to them in support of Trump's policies in assumption that their audience was white and would also agree with the policies, while on the inside the students disagreed and thought about how his policies would have affected their families had they been in place when their parents immigrated 30-40 years ago. One student remarked on a less common response about revealing his Palestinian heritage. "When they found out I was Palestinian, they said the occupation is a crime, isn't it, and I had never heard that from a non-Arab. He understood. He didn't ask me how I feel about it. They want you to say that Israel has some good points and it's democratic. The U.S. is screwing us over."

Because white passing is often not the individual's choice, challenges can arise when the decision is made to "reveal" one's ethnic identity. On the other hand, part-Arab students whose skin-tone is fair and involuntarily become coded in the mainstream society as non-Arab are impacted with the complexity of being able to ultimately "choose" how they self-identify. Although choice is typically known to be positive and important in understanding individual and collective identity, part-Arab students may have to wade through the prejudicial treatment existing in their own mainstream society and also parts of the Arab world.

Students spoke about their parents' experiences with choosing to pass. The most common characteristic was changing of the name. Many parents decided to change their names to more American sounding names, upon immigration to the U.S. One student remembered the time his mother changed her name back to her more Arabic sounding name after using her American name throughout his childhood. This action represents re-navigation through the identity process, and the student assumed his mother did this because her own mother was nearing the end of life.

When first generation Arab immigrants choose stronger connections to the mainstream culture over their heritage culture, it may negatively impact the second and third generations causing them to have a more difficult time navigating through identity development. When students begin to navigate and make connections with their Arab ethnicity, a longing for more Arab culture and a stronger sense of connection for the "homeland" can occur. The Arabic language uses the word *al-ghourba* to describe this feeling under diasporic exile. One student acknowledged the connection she developed to Egypt as a result of moving there with her family for a year, after being assimilated in a non-Arab country for the early part of her childhood. This year was crucial in developing a connection to her half-Egyptian identity so that when she moved away, she experienced periods of feeling *al-ghourba*, especially when her mother played Arabic music, or when she visited and connected with Egyptians in the Coptic organization to which she belonged. Another student reported that "alienation resonates with me strongly. My siblings and I have been struggling with being white-passing individuals but also feelings as though we are not "white" culturally. It's difficult when you feel alienated from those around you because they don't understand who you are and to a certain extent, you don't either." She described *al-ghourba* as "nostalgia for something you do not have, and it encompasses many emotions for me."

Students also recognized the affordances that came with passing voluntarily or involuntarily as white, although with a twinge of challenge. "When you're darker you can't be too outward about it because you don't know how people will take it. When you're lighter, you want people to know that it's a part of your identity. It's a very weird thing." One student reported that as a child, she had imagined her Arab father hanging out with other white dads, but when as an adolescent she got the opportunity to bring her dad to a tailgate party, they got into a fight. Her parents encouraged and instilled a strong connection to both her ethnic identity and also the mainstream culture, and although she enjoyed her relationship to her Arab identity, the connection to the American culture created a desire for a more "Americanized" family at certain points in her life. "You have certain affordances when you don't look super ethnic. I wished we

were more Americanized as a family, but now that I'm older, I don't want a boring white dad. I'm happy with my opinionated father. I was told it was a good thing and was surrounded by positive aspects of my duel identity." Understanding the positive and negative affordances that white passing often provides can be seen as a helpful tool in navigating one's self identity.

Language and Identity

Location

All ten students reported speaking English as their first language and Arabic and/or Spanish as their second and in some instances third language; however, English remained the primary language of communication with family and friends throughout childhood and adolescence. Seven out of ten students reported current enrollment in an Arabic language class at the large public university in which the study took place at the first or third semester level (out of six semesters total) although two noted that they will not have time in their schedules to continue Arabic language courses after this semester. For one student, this realization dramatically impacted her connection to her Arab identity. One ethnically Arab and Hispanic student reported higher overall proficiency in Spanish as a second language as compared to Arabic, although she did not formally study Spanish in school. She acknowledged this proficiency in Spanish was a result of having a Hispanic mother and growing up in Texas, where many family friends came from Mexico and spoke Spanish. This ethnically Arab and Hispanic student reported speaking Spanish at home or in the workplace during childhood and/or adolescence. The two other students who identified as Arab and Hispanic reported a more complex relationship to Spanish in that one student understood Spanish, but could not produce it whereas the other student knew very little but expressed she would like to learn more in order to connect to her Hispanic roots.

Nine of the ten students grew up living in the United States, and more specifically, seven of the ten students grew up in Houston and Austin, Texas throughout their childhood and into young adulthood, including at the time of the focus groups. One student grew up in the "deep south" while another student was born and raised in the northeast United States. One student moved with her family to the United States from Europe in late childhood. She reported speaking English 80-100% of the time with her family and siblings although she also spoke her European language with her parents and Arabic with her Egyptian relatives if they shared equal knowledge of Arabic. The results above support the academic literature and the argument for location having a large influence on the students' ability to speak their minority language(s), Spanish and Arabic.

Language Crossing and Code-Switching

Every student reported that the language in which they communicated switched depending on their audience and students stated that this was in order to practice their Arabic vocabulary. It also was a means by which to more closely connect with their Arab heritage. Arabic vocabulary usage proved essential and critical when attempting to communicate with students' Arab family members, either in the United States or abroad. Students reported instances of switching their language depending on their moods. Several instances indicated that students switched to Arabic/Spanish or the other primary language other than English to express anger. Additionally, students reported higher occurrences of switching their language(s) mid conversation in order to fully express themselves, use a wider range of descriptions and clarify meaning.

Table 3: Code-Switching Examples

حرام = taboo haram	يلّا = let's go yalla
إن شاء الله = God willing inshallah	حبيبتي = my love Habibiti
صحتين = to your health SaHatain	يعني = like/meaning-used as a filler word ya3ni

...ف = so…/filler word faa	حياتي = my life Hayati
مبروك = congratulations mabrook	يا الله = oh God ya Allah
بحبك = I love you baHebak	بحس ب followed by an English word

Overall, students reported that switching their language allowed for them to practice speaking Arabic and/or Spanish, express themselves fully and get a point across better or clarify a meaning, and connect with their Arab ethnicity. I asked students to fill in the blank "I feel more ethnically _____ when I speak _____." Six of the ten students wrote that they felt more ethnically Arab/Lebanese/Middle Eastern when they spoke Arabic. One student reported feeling ethnically white, but felt as though he were embracing his mother's Lebanese cultural background when he spoke Arabic. Another student reported that she felt more Latina when she spoke Spanish, and the last student did not think this question applied as he only fluently spoke English. Several students reported feeling "less ethnically (Arab) when they spoke (English). As a result, the findings support existing literature that code-switching and crossing language helps students perform cultural acts of identity and supports the third argument by describing themselves as more ethnically Arab when speaking the Arabic language.

Arabic and Arab Identity

Students generally did not feel that speaking Arabic was necessary in order for one to be considered Arab, but rather that one should have "an understanding of the culture and the expectations that are set in an Arab community." Meaning a person should fundamentally understand what is appropriate in Arab culture and have a sense of national pride which extends to pan-Arab pride. However, students related to the question of deepening ones positive connection to their Arab ethnicity through the Arabic language because the correlation with language and identity was in fact positive. One student commented that identifying as Arab implied that one would speak the Arabic language, and that he felt like he needed to start explaining his background and other aspects that connected him to the ethnicity beyond the language when he revealed his Arab ethnicity. Students agreed with this statement and added that "a disclaimer" is often needed. If they spoke Arabic, it could help them to shift to "the other side" (meaning adding Arabic authenticates the experience of being half-Arab). "It feels a little less deep because you can't go all the way to the language level. [language] is part of the center of your Self." Another student acknowledged that although he had never had anyone say he was not Arab because he did not speak the language, but wanted to learn it personally in order to help him know what it is like to be Arab.

Two students had particularly interesting relationships with the Arabic language. For one, Arabic was "crucial to understanding of my identity in a sense." She spoke about the connection "on a deeper level" when speaking Arabic and wanting this so badly, despite getting made fun of during her adolescence for attempting to speak with her Arab cousins, partly because of her "country-side" accent and partly due to being less skilled in Arabic overall. She reported pulling back and removing herself from Arabic for a while, but that college classes helped her become interested again in trying to improve her Arabic and that the college

environment was especially productive in connecting her to her multi-ethnic identity. Confidence was a re-occurring theme for students in general when it came to trying to speak Arabic with their extended Arab family. This confidence gradually increased during their university years when students met other students with similar backgrounds or with a multi-ethnic identity. Surrounding themselves with peers who were also learning Arabic for the first time normalized the process of learning Arabic later in life and helped shape students' ethnic identity that can lead to identity affirmation and identity achievement.

For another student whose had grown up with without the other aspects that typically related the students to their part-Arab ethnicity, such as religion, familial cultural traditions, food and visits to the parents' countries of origin, the Arabic language "opened up a whole new world." Although she identified as Arab and Hispanic, she did not feel "allowed to connect," and so Arabic classes and thus, the Arabic language opened her eyes and her mind and was the gateway to permission to connect to her ethnicity that she had been deprived of due to her Lebanese grandparents choosing to acculturate 100% with the mainstream culture upon immigrating to the United States.

The Arabic language also extended beyond familial relations for about half of the students. Two students reported wanting to move to Lebanon or Egypt in order to strengthen their Arabic language and not lose the Arabic that they had spent so much time and energy learning over the past few years. These students felt that Arabic was important for not only connecting to their Arab ethnicity, but also for their future employment. One student planned to become an immigration lawyer in order to assist immigrants much like her own family navigate the ever evolving political process and bureaucratic hoops immigrants often go through to obtain legal residency status in the United States. Another student planned to use her Arabic

professionally while working in some capacity with international politics and improving migration policies. She hoped that her Arabic would be useful for reading Lebanese newspapers for research and speaking with Lebanese diaspora and refugees. Two students sought to use their Arabic language in the public health and medical fields, theoretically in the Middle East. These students commented that the desire to work in the Middle East and use Arabic on a daily basis was a combination of wanting to connect more closely to their roots and their family by keeping up with their Arabic, and wanting to help those in need who have similar roots as their families.

Chapter 4

CASE STUDIES

Carla and Noor

Although each student presented unique and interesting data that contributed to the findings of the study, a few students deserve closer attention. Born to a dark skinned Hispanic father and a light skinned second generation Arab mother, this student expressed having a very complex relationship with her identity. Carla (name changed) was raised by both parents to pass as white so that she did not even know her mother was Arab until she was five years old. Her Arab grandparents had immigrated to the United States and left their Arab identities in Lebanon, even legally changing their names upon arrival to the United States. As a result, Carla's mother was raised as though she were non-Arab and in fact passed as white American and spoke only English. Carla's mother raised her without a relationship with Lebanese culture and heritage because that was all she knew. As a result, she ultimately struggled to understand who she was as a person. Because she is light skinned, growing up, Carla thought she was white. It was not until she was older, when she saw instances of discrimination against her older, darker skinned siblings, that she discovered she was ethnically "else." During middle school, Carla rejected connections to being ethnically Hispanic and Arab as a result of mainstream culture not being accepting of Arab or Cuban people and where and how she grew up. She related this to part of the reason it had been so difficult to build a relationship with these two heritages, specifically for fear of being labeled a terrorist or threat. For Carla, food was the primary way she connected to her ethnicities. She loved to cook and eat the food. She enjoyed learning about the history and art that came from Cuban and Lebanese cultures. Since coming to college, she had been able to learn Arabic and this had helped her connect to her Arab ethnicity on a deeper level. She felt

strongly that both Arabic and Spanish were very important and that speaking the two languages affected her life. Only recently, since attending college, had Carla "really come to terms" with who she is, where her family comes from, and had tried to embrace it daily. Because she was raised and told to pass as white, but later discovered she was in fact ethnically Hispanic and Arab, Carla struggled with self-identity in her late adolescence and young adulthood and continued to struggle with being "allowed" to connect to her own ethnicities. She had only recently entered into *identity achievement,* the cognitive processes of exploring and understanding the meaning of one's identity and was therefore fairly late in reaching the positive feelings and sense of belonging to one's social group as seen in *identity affirmation.* However, for Carla, since that she had begun the process of connecting to her duel heritage identity, she was attaching to as much of it as she could. This attachment had taken the form of the Arabic language in such that she listened to Arabic music every day and became very excited to speak Arabic with friends so that it was "hard to turn off."

Alternatively, Noor's parents fully embraced Noor's father's Lebanese heritage from the earliest age so that she was flown back to Lebanon at the age of two to be baptized. Growing up, Noor was led to believe that she was full Lebanese. This could have resulted from the lack of adult relationship her mother had with her Hispanic father because of her marriage to Noor's father. It was only when she was applying for college, did she realize she was quarter Hispanic when her mother suggested she apply for National Hispanic Merit, but her father queried why she would do that since she was "Lebanese." Noor stated that she feels very American in her socio-political views but that the way she interacts with family and friends is "very very Arab." Growing up, Noor had a complicated relationship to the Arabic language. She often felt teased by cousins on her father's side for mispronouncing words or speaking less fluently or

"eloquently." As a result, Noor repressed her Arabic language skills during her adolescence, even though she traveled annually as a child to visit relatives in northern Lebanon. Upon entering college, Noor enrolled in Arabic courses and took two full years. She stated that thinking about Arabic roots helped in her language learning but that she "doesn't get enough practice to stay good at Arabic." Over the course of her life, her father had sponsored and relocated seven of his eight siblings to the United States, creating his own Lebanese familial community in the U.S southwest. As a result, Noor's childhood consisted largely of reinforcing the value of family, serving nuts and dried fruits, and attending Arab gatherings and dancing. At the same time, Noor experienced discrimination based on her dark hair in a "blonde" girls' catholic school. She also starkly remembered having her teddy-bear ripped apart and from her hands at the airport shortly after 9/11. Nonetheless, Noor stated that she found a healthy balance growing up in such close proximity to her father's family, speaking Arabic with mistakes and not always fitting the "American" look. As a result, Noor moved through *identity achievement* and *identity affirmation* by her young adulthood to the extent that she had decided that her future was in immigration law and that she should marry a Lebanese man so that she could "continue the legacy [her father started]."

The following is an excerpt from the first group demonstrating differences between Carla and Noor's difference backgrounds:

Noor: You have to really work for it I think [meaning community]. This city is not like a super Arab place, but my dad has made it a point to be involved with three different Lebanese cultural clubs. So like we go to picnics, and we go to heflas and we go to stuff where it's like just Lebanese culture. Like most of the people know the language and me and my siblings don't, but we still go and like eat the food and like dance and that's like enough.

Cecil: Debkah

Noor: You know. I can't do the like [trills]. I can't even match it.

Cecil: Oh my gawwwd. The weddings. Those weddings. And the like [tries to trill]. I'm like what?! And what is the thing with the weddings, the sprinkle, they like dip the thing in the….

Noor: Oh, the like, it's like holy water.

Carla: I literally have no idea what you're talking about with this or the other thing.

Cecil: Oh my God, it's just like… (disbelief about wedding and trill) We were talking about just like functions in Lebanon are like very dramatic.

Heritage Language Learning Discussion

Students from the second focus group had a productive discussion surrounding heritage language learning and provided advice for language educators. The discussion mirrored findings discussed in the literature review section about heritage language learning in that heritage classes should differ depending on the amount of heritage language with which the student is entering the classroom. It also highlighted the dialectal feature, which is unique to Arabic, and the desire to learn the Arabic dialect close to the students' heritage.

Sammy: I noticed this whenever I took Spanish in high school, and I'm kinda noticing it a little bit in the Arabic program now, I feel like, uh, that they're…that learning by definitions can kinda cause problems in the real world, and like I feel like if we were to like learn more phrases and words that are actually used in the real world instead of like stuff that is like by definition that's what it means, but no one would actually use that in a conversation and stuff. I can't actually think of any examples off the top of my head, but like there are just like a few native speakers in my class and we'll learn something in class and I'll try to use it the next day when I'm talking to them and they're like "no, no one would ever say that," and it's just like ehh, like

ehh, I feel like it would have been better if I hadn't had learned that in the first place. I'd rather learn th.., how it's gonna be actually overseas instead of just like what it would be like if I were to go through like an Arabic-English classroom.

Researcher: Okay, so when you talk to people outside of your classroom?

Sammy: Classmates outside of the classroom.

Researcher: Oh, okay who are native speakers…both parents, or something?

Sammy: Yeah.

Dina: I can think of an example. I said something something tafoolatak to my dad and he was like what are you talking about? And I was like, you're childhood, and he was like "lama kint saghir?"

Students laugh

Researcher: Like in this one box of the word childhood.

Dina: And then he makes up weird reasons why like, other than fuSHA, he'll be like, well maybe it's a Jordanian word, you know he just makes up random things, but…

Researcher: He's trying to appease you?

Dina: Yeah.

Christopher: I mean, that's why I specifically chose my professor. He's a…I took him for Palestine and Palestinians, Professor Yusef. Cuz I knew he was gonna teach me Palestinian Arabic, and so like I've gotten, a lot of times he'll be like "and this is what the word is in shami (Syrian), but actually Palestinians use this word, and it's actually like a maSri (Egyptian) word or something like that, and so, some of them I had picked up because I had heard them before and I was like, okay, and so I was very happy I chose…I probably, well it's one of the reasons, just because how my schedule was, but I won't be taking more Arabic, and so I'm able to like,

take the Palestinian class and that's really helpful especially at the foundational level and now I'm just gonna try to do self study and talk with my own family to try to learn more, but.

And I guess another thing with this question, especially the way it is phrased "heritage language learner," so like you can't just tell by heritage whether or not people are gonna know Arabic, or you know, maybe you can? I don't know. It seems like especially talking to this group and then my class, if you had two parents who were Arab, then you know Arabic, and if you had one person who was Arab, you don't know much Arabic going into it, and so it's a very different experience taking Arabic for those two types. Umm. I mean, like, I had to study a lot more than the "heritage" learners. Cuz I mean like you don't know anything, and they were coming off the like, "I know the word and how it sounds, I may not be able to spell it perfectly, but that usually gets them through, especially in Arabic I… so they don't really have to memorize much or learn much new stuff early on, whereas I'm learning everything. Literally, I know nothing.

Dina: I think it would be helpful though to have a heritage speakers class because the language needs are different.

Christopher: Yeah, I guess that's true, if I hadn't had been able to, like I was saying, specifically target a Palestinian professor, I wouldn't have taken Arabic because if I had gotten an Egyptian professor, it would have been pointless.

Dina: I have an Egyptian professor now.

Christopher: I'm so sorry…

Dina: No, it's fine! I just speak shami. There's a row of us who all speak shami…

Christopher: So, if you could, for like heritage learners, it's just like, you specifically want to learn your heritage's language. You don't want to learn "Arabic for Everyone" and I'm personally not that invested in learning to read and write. I mean eventually it's a goal…

Researcher: You just wanna be able to speak. You wanna be able to connect with your family.

Dina: That's the motivation for me as well…

Christopher: Exactly. You're doing both…I almost want to rush the learning of the speaking, so that you can get to the level of the students with two Arab parents, and then you go into another class where it's like, oh, you know how to speak it, and you go into another class and it's like, okay, let's learn how to write. I mean of course it's different from wanting to learn affectively to fully mastering the language over the course of a bunch of classes, but it's because you have different goals.

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

The above findings demonstrate that strong familial relations, but not necessarily Arabic bilingualism within this dynamic, correlate to feelings of connectedness to a students' part-Arab identity. Seven of the ten students were currently enrolled in Arabic language classes, which means that they were still gaining Arabic language skills, primarily speaking English in the home, yet reported a high understanding of what it meant to be ethnically Arab. Further evidence includes students' reports of seeking solace in the home, a mother reminding her daughter to be proud of her Arab ethnicity, and "feeling connected" to Arab ethnicity based on food cooked in the home. One student even said she felt more Arab than American even though she grew up in the United States and spoke English in the home. Findings suggest that other aspects of the Arab culture in the home and closeness among familial relations contributed to this sense of feeling ethnically Arab in the absence of Arab bilingualism, such as eating Arab food and listening to Arab music, in addition to visiting one's parent's country of birth. Food and family traditions were repeatedly emphasized in the focus groups and also the questionnaire as ways students who knew little Arabic growing up connected to their Arab ethnicities.

Additionally, location of living highly influenced the students' abilities to learn languages which correspond to their multiethnic identity. One can point to the evidence that the Arab and Hispanic students reported significantly higher proficiency in the Spanish language as a second language than the Arabic language. Growing up in Texas allowed for much more contact with Spanish speakers than Arabic speakers, given the proximity to Mexico and the amount of people whose first language is Spanish as compared to Arabic.

Evidence also suggested that as a student's proficiency in the Arabic language increased, so did the ability to understand further what it means to be Arab. Results indicated that students felt more ethnically Arab when they spoke Arabic. Students also claimed that speaking Arabic

allowed them to better connect with their extended family and communicate with their elders and their Arab cousins. Several students reported speaking to their Arab friends in half Arabic/half English and/or code-switching in Arabic words to "get my point across better." This is the case because there are words in every language that create a stronger sense of meaning to the communicator and his or her audience. When a family member only speaks Arabic, one's ability to speak in the family member's mother tongue gives the student a sense of belongingness to his or her family and Arab ethnic identity.

Although a large part of identity development seemed connected to the Arabic language, was is not the sole influencer on identity formation among these part-Arab university students. As discussed in the findings, growing up in a post 9/11 United States where discrimination and prejudice against the Arab ethnicity and other darker skinned immigrants is overt can impact how part-Arab adolescents perceive themselves. On a pan-national Arab level, those students whose Christian family members reinforced separation between themselves and their Muslim Arab peers may have been spared internal conflict during prime development stages, providing them the opportunity to connect more with the mainstream U.S. religion, and thus lessening the "othering" associated with identity struggle. Alternatively, this mindset can lead to feelings of guilt and disconnect as the adolescent reaches young adulthood if an "us/them" construct exisits within the family. Students who struggled with prejudice or watched as family members struggled as a result of 9/11 events talked about navigating this part of their identity process as something that they must either reject or suppress (their Arab ethnicity), or alternatively, fully embrace. As the majority of the students interviewed identified as Christian and Lebanese, national pride was also a large influence on Arab identity for many of these students. Lebanese national pride instilled by growing up surrounded by family members or an adopted family

through community helped these students reach a level of comfort in understanding the culture from where their parents immigrated.

IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Although this qualitative study showed that for the majority of students, Arab bilingualism was not the driving factor in strongly connecting to and relating with their part-Arab identity, the Arabic language still remained an interesting variable that helped further connect the students to their Arab ethnicity and identity. At times during childhood, students reported feeling confusion about not fitting into one or both of their ethnic identities, but this did not necessarily implicate the lack of Arabic. As stated before, many variables contribute to constructing one's identity, and during childhood, family and peer relationships can hinder or help this identity construction and reaching identity affirmation. A future study might consist of more participants who spent a larger amount of their childhood growing up in the Arab world and speaking Arabic in the home. Research in the Arab world would allow for comparing results to those students who grew up in the United States to see how these students' experiences differed.

Research from this study contributed to the growing body of literature on heritage language learners and heritage language education. As reviewed in the existing literature, the definition of a heritage language learner is loose and encompasses a variety of kinds of students who are interested in knowing languages associated with their roots. The definition of heritage language learners can span from fluent speakers to those students having no prior knowledge of the language, and so an important aspect of heritage language learning is to be able to assess the student's immediate language needs. Those heritage Arabic learners who consider themselves 2nd generation Arab Americans with both parents identifying as ethnically Arab and who spoke

Arabic to each other in front of their children at home have different challenges from heritage Arabic learners who consider themselves 2nd generation part-Arab and who come to an Arab classroom with minimal speaking skills. These students may better benefit from typical second language acquisition classrooms that prioritize speaking the dialect of Arabic that is associated with their heritage in addition to the emphasis on culture and history. These multiethnic students may also have an advantage over the other typical second language acquisition students in their ability to pronounce sounds affiliated with the Arabic language, and that are not found in the English language, for example. Parents of the Arab ethnicity who spoke Arabic at home or on the phone to other family members throughout the child's first six months and beyond, provided the child exposure to a phonemic map that students whose parents did not speak Arabic do not have. Ultimately though, any social environment in which the Arabic language is spoken, is proven beneficial for students wishing to connect to their Arab ethnicity through the Arabic language. Parents unified in mixed ethnic marriages would provide a great groundwork for their children by speaking the languages associated with their heritages. These multilingual children will be equipped with the multilingual tools they need to help them navigate through their multiethnic identity as a result. If parents are not able or not willing to provide this groundwork in the home, part-Arab children would greatly benefit from exposure to their heritage languages in social settings, such as day schools, religious institutions or Arab communities either in the United States or in the Arab world.

This study found a better understanding of how a multiethnic identity in part-Arab university students developed based on factors such as multilingualism, environment, and family and peer relationships. This study will contribute information to the fields of psychosocial development, linguistics and education of heritage speaking university students and fill a gap in

the lack of research of those who identity as part-Arab, as most research surrounds Arab American identity and language of first generation Arab Americans whose parents are both ethnically Arab. Finally, this study may assist researchers in these fields in creating curriculum and/or activities related to multiethnic identity and multilingualism in order to help children of multiracial families reach identity affirmation by late adolescence or early adulthood. As prior scholarship shows, feeling a sense of belonging to one's ethnicity and the ability to communicate with the language used within their ethnicity creates an invaluable relationship for the speaker and listener. As seen with the part-Arab participants interviewed in this study, pride and connectedness to their dual heritage and the ability to communicate through multilingualism has supported university students' development of positive self-esteem and achievement of identity affirmation. By bringing the students' voices to the foreground and recognizing the importance of their multiethnic heritage, the results of this study serve to assist part-Arab students in reaching self-satisfaction and fulfilling positive cognitive and social development.

Appendices

APPENDIX A: Part-Arab and Multilingual Questionnaire

Background Questions:

1. Name: _____

2. Age: _____

3. Sex: Male Female

4. Please circle your class standing:

a. Freshman b. Sophomore c. Junior d. Senior e. Graduate

5. University in attendance: _____

6. Where were you born? _____

7. Where did you grow up? _____

8. Have you ever lived in the Arabic speaking world? Please explain:

_____

9. Father's ethnicity _____ Born in the United States? _____

10. Mother's ethnicity _____ Born in the United States? _____

11. Religion(s) practiced in the home _____

12. Do you visit the home countries of your parents? Explain frequency and length of visits:

_____

_____

13. How do you currently engage with your ethnicities inside and outside the home?

_____

_____

14. Explain your relationship to the mainstream culture versus your heritage culture around you:

_____

_____

_____

Language Background Questions:

1. In which language(s) do you speak to your parents/siblings?

_____

2. In which language(s) do you speak to your extended family?

_____

3. In which language(s) do you speak with your friends?

_____

4. Years of formal Arabic or _____ language education: _____Currently enrolled? _____

5. What daily percentage do you use Arabic and/or_____? (please specify for each language)

   a. 0-20% b. 21-40% c. 41-60% d. 61-80% e. 81-100%

6. Do you read Arabic or _____ books, magazines or Internet articles in your free time?

_____

7. Do you watch Arabic or _____ media? (TV, Movies)

_____

8. Do you listen to Arabic or _____ music?

_____

9. Describe your relationship to the following Arabic word: الغربة

_____

_____

Language Proficiency Questions:

Select one or both languages and self-score your proficiency in the following areas with this scale:

Arabic/ Other_____ 1 (none) 2 (beginner) 3 (intermediate) 4 (advanced) 5 (native)

Reading: _____

Writing: _____

Speaking: _____

Listening: _____

1. How important are these skills to your ethnic identity? Please rate one or both languages as necessary (circle to indicate language):

a. Arabic/_____ reading: Low Medium High

b. Arabic/_____ writing: Low Medium High

c. Arabic/_____speaking: Low Medium High

d. Arabic/_____listening: Low Medium High

2. Out of the skills mentioned above, which one, if any, would you like to improve? Why?

_____

3. List any difficulties you have learning these languages. Please be language specific:

_____

4. What is most helpful in learning one or both of these languages?

_____

Multiethnic/Culture Questions:

1. I identify myself ethnically as: _____

2. For the following statements, please refer to the scale: **1 (strongly disagree) – 5 (strongly agree)**

**Please indicate both ethnicities for each statement when applicable*: *Arab/ Non-Arab:*_____

A. I am interested in the traditions, the history and the customs of my roots. _____

B. I think a lot about how being able to speak Arabic and/or _____ may affect my life. _____

C. I believe that being able to speak Arabic and/or _____ will aid me in my future. _____

D. The Arabic and/or _____ language is very important to me. _____

E. The people in my circle of friends are mostly of Arab heritage. Yes/No *Non-Arab Yes/No*

F. I connect with older generations of my similar ethnicities to further connect to my heritage.

_____ Ethnicity/ages of members and frequency of visits: _____

G. I intend to enroll in an Arabic and/or _____ language course in the future. _____

H. I feel pride in belonging to the _____ ethnicity(ies). _____

I. I clearly understand what it means to be Arab. _____

J. I clearly understand what it means to be American. _____

K. I clearly understand what it means to be Arab/American. _____

L. I clearly understand what it means to be (your choice) _____

3. What kind of impact did the events on "9/11" have on your life? Additionally, how did it influence your family's relationship to the United States as a first (or later) generation Arab immigrant?

_____

_____

_____

Ethnicity and Code-Switching Questions:

1. Other ways I engage in my multiethnic identity:

_____

_____

2. Explain any confusion you experienced while growing up in a multiethnic household:

_____

_____

3. Periods in my life when I rejected one or more of my ethnicities:

_____

_____

4. Periods in my life when I accepted one or more of my ethnicities:

_____

_____

5. The language in which I communicate switches depending on my mood. *Yes/No*

Please explain: _____

6. The language in which I communicate switches depending on the listener/audience. *Yes/No*

Please explain: _____

7. Fill in the following blanks with your own words:

A. I feel more ethnically _____ when I speak _____.

B. I feel less ethnically _____ when I speak _____.

8. I switch my language mid conversation in order to fully express myself. *1 (never) – 5 (always)* _____

Write examples in the language you switch to if you switch your language mid conversation:

_____

_____

_____

_____

9. Switching my language allows me to _____.

Free Write:

Please use this space to include additional thoughts about anything mentioned above. You may write in whichever language(s) you feel you can best relay your thoughts. Thank you so much for your time!

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX B: Focus Group Questions

Language and Identity

1. How does your relationship with the languages you speak impact your ethnic identity? Is this relationship positive or negative or somewhere in between? How has it changed over the span of your lifetime into young adulthood?

2. Tell me about how you and your family use language at home and also how you and your friends use language outside of the home. Does religion factor into any of part of language use? Have you noticed a language use shift when you traveled/lived outside the US?

3. Can you explain any self-struggles you've had in creating your self-identity and how language has/has not played a role?

4. Do you feel like you've reached any milestones in creating your self-identity? How much has language played a role? Why or why not?

5. Do you think one has to speak Arabic in order to be considered Arab? How you relate to Arab nationalism in general or nationalism from your specific Arab county?

Ethnicity and Identity

1. How has your life or your family's life (immediate or extended) been impacted by events such as "9/11" and Trump's presidency?

2. What kinds of activities or events do you participate in in order to connect deeper with one or more of your ethnicities? Have your parents been supportive in your seeking connection to your ethnic background?

3. What has been the biggest influence in creating your self-identity and how likely is your self-identity to shift in the future? What might influence this shift?

4. Based off your experiences, what would you like to tell educators and curriculum designers whose focus is teaching heritage language learners the Arabic language?

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